


FOCUS

THE MONTHLY BUSINESS NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE
LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

DECEMBER 2024

A portrait of Jane Mitchell, a woman with shoulder-length, wavy, light brown hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a blue blazer over a light-colored top and a necklace with a heart-shaped pendant. The background is a dark, neutral color.

Jane Mitchell
**2024 ATHENA
LEADERSHIP
AWARD
RECIPIENT**

*Entrepreneur
Bolsters Brands
and Community*

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LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER

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Let's Celebrate Local Women Leaders as 2024 Concludes

One of the highlights of the year for the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) is celebrating the women leaders in our community with the ATHENA Leadership Award. ATHENA was created in Lansing more than four decades ago by Martha Metz, and we've proudly watched the program grow regionally, nationally and globally.

Join us as we welcome the 43rd recipient of the ATHENA Lansing Leadership Award, Jane Mitchell, owner of Jungle Jane Promotions. As the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce's 2024 ATHENA Leadership Award recipient, Jane is a fine example of embracing the ATHENA principles: those who strive toward the highest levels of professional accomplishment, excel in their chosen field, have devoted time and energy to their community, and pave paths for other women to follow.

Jane's entrepreneurial and community leadership have made a lasting difference, not just through her business but in the lives of many she has supported along the way.

LRCC is also pleased to recognize Jacqueline Taylor, owner of Little Dreamers Daycare, as the 2025 ATHENA PowerLink recipient. The business mentoring program connects women business owners with a skilled, specially selected advisory panel. We're excited to see how Jacqueline leverages her panel in growing childcare services in the Lansing region.

Both Jane and Jacqueline will be honored at the December 5, 2024 event at the Lansing Center, where just last December we unveiled the ATHENA Lansing Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame recognizes all the ATHENA Lansing recipients going back to the first-ever ATHENA recipient, Mary Lee Davis in 1982.

Congratulations to our local women leaders. We're fortunate to call you neighbors and colleagues.

Finally, as 2024 comes to a close, I'd like to wish everyone a wonderful holiday season and a joyful and prosperous new year. Thank you for your investment in and commitment to the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. ●



TIM DAMAN
PRESIDENT AND CEO
LANSING REGIONAL
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Jane's entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to the ATHENA leadership principles have made a lasting difference, not just through her business but in the lives of many she has supported along the way.

LRCC members have unparalleled access to company and staff profiles on the LRCC website. To access and update this information at any point, visit lansingchamber.org and enter your username and password. If you have not yet signed into the site, please follow the simple password reset instructions.

Call (517) 487-6340 with any questions.

December 2024

12/5 **ATHENA LANSING CELEBRATION**
Thursday, Dec. 5, from 11: 30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Lansing Center
 Join us for an inspiring afternoon at the ATHENA Lansing Celebration on Thursday, Dec. 5, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Lansing Center! We will celebrate Jane Mitchell, owner of Jungle Jane Promotions, as she receives the prestigious ATHENA Leadership Award. We'll shine a spotlight on Jacqueline Taylor, owner of Little Dreamers Daycare Center, as the distinguished 2025 ATHENA PowerLink recipient.
Cost: Tickets are \$60 for LRCC members and \$90 for future LRCC members.

12/6 **FIRST FRIDAY LRCC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CALL UPDATE**
Friday, Dec. 6, from 11 to 11:30 a.m.
ZOOM
 Join us every first Friday of the month for an insightful briefing on policy and political developments impacting the business community. Hosted by LRCC Public Affairs Senior Vice President, Steve Japinga, these monthly calls are designed to keep our members informed and engaged.
Cost: There is no cost to attend.

12/9 **POLICY & REGULATORY SERIES: LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE – PAID SICK LEAVE & MINIMUM WAGE UPDATE**
Monday, Dec. 9, from 10 to 11 a.m.
ZOOM
 The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Policy and Regulatory Education Series provides members with opportunities to hear from experts on specific policy and regulatory issues that may impact businesses at the federal, state or local level of government. Attorneys from Foster Swift will provide employment and labor law updates pertaining to changes to paid sick leave and minimum wage.
Cost: There is no cost to attend.

12/10 **LANSING ECONOMIC CLUB**
Tuesday, Dec. 10, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center
 The December Lansing Economic Club will feature a panel discussion focused on the future of mobility, specifically the advancements and transformative changes within the electric vehicle (EV) sector.
Cost: Tickets are offered at no cost for Lansing Economic Club members, \$55 for LRCC members, and \$75 for future LRCC members.

12/10 **DECEMBER MEMBER MIXER**
Tuesday, Dec. 10, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Red Cedar Lodge
 Get ready to celebrate the holiday season in style at the December Member Mixer hosted at Red Cedar Lodge. Join us for an evening of festive cheer, networking, and relationship-building!
Cost: This event is offered at no cost.

12/11 **LRCC ALL BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE**
Wednesday, Dec. 11, from 9 to 10 a.m.
Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce
 Join us for the LRCC ALL Business Roundtable, our year-end gathering that brings together all our monthly roundtables—Delta Township-Eaton County, Lansing-Delhi Township, East Lansing-Meridian Township, and Clinton County. This December, we'll unite at the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce to reflect on our collective progress, share insights from across the region, and discuss key issues impacting our business communities.
Cost: There is no cost to attend.

12/17 **BUSINESS EDUCATION SERIES: AVOID PEAKS & VALLEYS IN YOUR SALES FUNNEL**
Tuesday, Dec. 17, from 10 to 11: 30 a.m.
Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce
 Every business owner prefers a referral to a cold lead. Referrals have a basis of trust and understanding that makes the sales process simpler to execute and winning easier to achieve. Referrals can't be generated intentionally however, right? Wrong! Led by Ian Richardson, BBA, CSAP, MCSA, Principal Consultant, Fox & Crow Group LLC & Managing Partner, Richardson & Richardson Consulting, LLC, attendees will learn how to structure an intentional referral generation pipeline from their existing clients while minimizing the risk of client churn.
Cost: This event is offered at no cost to LRCC members and \$25 for future LRCC members.

12/19 **DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION SERIES: TOP TEN HIGH-LEVEL DEI CHALLENGES AND BEST PRACTICES**
Thursday, Dec. 19, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.
Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce
 Join us for a power-packed session for Managers, Directors, and Executives who want to elevate services to a new level from developing a diverse, inclusive, culturally competent workforce. Facilitated by, Chanel

Continued on page 7

Thank You Renewing Members

American Cancer Society	Kelley Cawthorne
Aqua Body Lab	Maloney Carpet Company
Armond Dalton Publishers, Inc.	McDonald's - Brandon VanPoppelen
Baker Drivetrain	McDonald's - John Campbell
Brian Songer Agency - Farm Bureau Insurance	McLaren Greater Lansing
Brittany Parks Process Consulting LLC	Michigan Association of Broadcasters
Campbell Inc. Press Repair	Michigan Automobile Dealers Association (MADA)
Canada Dry Bottling Co. of Lansing	Michigan Flyer (Indian Trails)
Capital Prime Steaks & Seafood	Michigan Women Forward
Child and Family Charities	Pincanna
Crowne Plaza Lansing	Richards & Cady Wealth Advisors
Dean Transportation, Inc.	Sylvan Learning Center
Derksen Dentistry	The Ticket Machine
Effectv	Tim Barry Agency - Farm Bureau Insurance
Ellison Brewery & Spirits	T-Mobile For Business
Exit Realty Home Partners	
Forster Woods Adult Day Center	
Holt & Dimondale Agency	
Hope & Teal Designs	
JEM Cleaning LLC	
Jon Anthony Florist dba Ha-Jon, Inc.	
Josh's Frogs LLC	
Jus Us Kidz Child Care & Family Services, LLC	

December 2024 Calendar of Events, from page 6

F. DeGuzman, Ph.D., CEO/Chief Engagement Officer, we'll review top DEI challenges, how to mitigate associated risks and walk away with best practices to increase employee engagement and performance.

Cost: This event is offered at no cost to LRCC members and \$25 for future LRCC members.

12/18

CHAMBER 360

Wednesday, Dec. 18, 8:30 to 10 a.m.

Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce

As a current member or a business considering joining the Lansing Regional Chamber, it is critically important that you understand and utilize the tools, resources and relationships available to you through your membership investment. The Chamber 360 program provides an intimate venue for you to connect with other members, provide brief remarks, meet the LRCC team and take a deeper dive into a LRCC membership.

Cost: This event is offered at no cost.

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10 Years

Hiring Solutions

10 Years

Michigan Credit Union League

10 Years

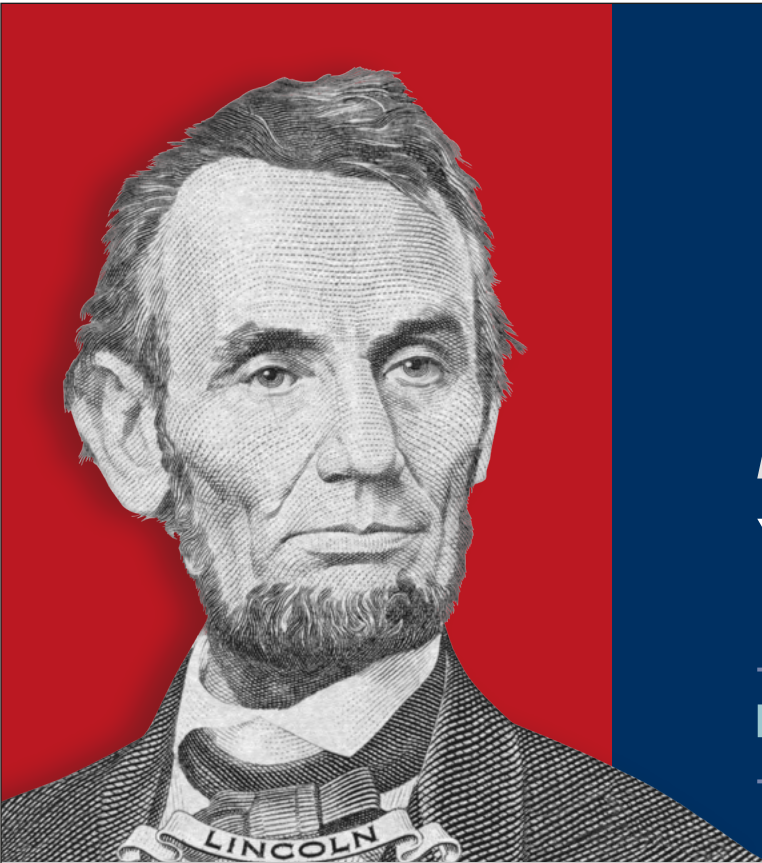
Swan Electric Company, Inc.

10 Years

Flagstar Bank

5 Years

We'd like to offer a special salute to these great organizations who reached milestone anniversaries as Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce members this month. Thank you for your continued support throughout the years!



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The Hundred Club of Greater Lansing Commemorates Four Decades of Giving

When a police officer, firefighter, or paramedic dies in the line of duty, the surviving family is often in a state of shock and at a loss for what to do next. Their “whole world has been turned upside down,” explained Suzy Carter, board secretary and executive director of the Hundred Club of Greater Lansing.



The Hundred Club of Greater Lansing has prepared for just such an event, with immediate financial assistance delivered within the first 48 hours. Club leaders meet with the surviving family to gift them a \$10,000 check that can be used for any imminent expenses, from funeral costs to airplane fare to mortgage payments.

“Our mission is pretty simple, and that’s kind of the beauty of it and the sadness of it,” said Carter. “We’re there, ready to respond.”

Insurance and government survivor benefits often take extensive paperwork and time to begin. The gift from the Hundred Club of Greater Lansing provides families with prompt, no-strings-attached aid in their time of grief.

“We know that this check that we deliver can help bridge that gap, at least for the next foreseeable future until they can get the rest of that stuff figured out,” according to Ingham County Sheriff Scott Wriggelsworth, who serves as president of the Hundred Club.

The nonprofit Hundred Club of Greater Lansing was created by community members in 1984 in response to the death of East Lansing Police Officer James Johnson, who was killed in the line of duty while attempting to arrest an auto thief.

Since its founding 40 years ago, the Hundred Club of Greater Lansing has provided immediate financial assistance to 19 families of public safety officials who died in the line of duty within Ingham, Eaton, and Clinton counties. The most recent \$10,000 check honored Sergeant Bill Darnell, who served with the DeWitt Township Police Department for 20 years. He died in October 2020 of complications from a COVID-19 infection contracted while on duty.

The Hundred Club of Greater Lansing has 150 active members who commit to donating \$100 each year, Carter said. The club can also accept one-time donations of any



Carter



Wriggelsworth

denomination by check or online.

Foremost, the funds are used toward immediate and as-needed long-term survivor assistance. Yet, over the years, the club’s charitable reach has extended to a scholarship fund for heroes’ college-aged children, a memorial wreath for the annual Michigan Law Enforcement Candlelight Memorial Service at the State Capitol, and partial scholarships for students enrolled in the Lansing Community College’s police academy, and fire science or paramedic programs. The club has also given funds to public safety officials injured on- or off-duty.

The Hundred Club also issues awards for heroism and professional excellence to Tri-County Region public safety officers at a ceremony held each spring. Nominations for 2024 will open in January 2025. The nominees tend to be recommended by their respective agencies, Wriggelsworth said, though the community is welcome to offer suggestions.

The awardees are recognized for achievements such as extraordinary valor, crime prevention, investigative activity, community relations, juvenile programs, drug prevention and control, training programs, traffic safety, and innovation.

Carter said the local Hundred Club is venturing into additional means of helping local public safety agencies, such as providing grant funds of up to \$10,000 for needed safety equipment.

“This is kind of a philosophical shift for us because we’ve always only supported line-of-duty death,” she said.

Wriggelsworth said the grants will assist regional agencies with safety-related purchases that might not otherwise be covered.

“The club has come a long way in the last 40 years, and we’re doing some different things,” Wriggelsworth said. “We’re trying to do some things more proactively to prevent tragedy as opposed to just reacting after the fact.”

For more information about the 100 Club of Greater Lansing, visit www.100clubofgreaterlansing.org. ●



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LEPFA's Latest Enhancements at the Lansing Center Strengthen Downtown Lansing

The Lansing Entertainment & Public Facilities Authority (LEPFA) is proud to introduce three new enhancements at the Lansing Center, each contributing to a more inclusive, welcoming, and revitalized downtown Lansing. LEPFA operates some of the city's top venues, including the Lansing Center, Jackson Field, and Groesbeck Golf Course, and is committed to fueling Lansing's economic growth and social vibrancy through memorable experiences. Over the past five years, LEPFA's facilities and events have attracted more than 3.3 million visitors to Lansing, generating an impressive economic impact of over \$192 million.

To enhance this impact, LEPFA has recently partnered with LAFUCU to add a Mamava® lactation pod at the Lansing Center. Located on the main concourse, this mobile lactation suite provides a private, comfortable, and secure space for mothers to breastfeed or pump, meeting the needs of parents attending events or simply enjoying downtown Lansing. "The Mamava pod is more than just a resource for mothers," said LEPFA President & CEO Tristan Wright. "It's a step toward making Lansing a more welcoming, accessible city."

LEPFA has also recently created a quiet space on the main concourse. This sensory-controlled environment offers a peaceful retreat for event-goers who need a break from the bustling convention atmosphere. Outfitted with dimmable lighting, a weighted blanket, and sensory tools like a wall-mounted fidget system, this space is ideal for neurodivergent individuals and anyone needing a moment to recharge, helping to make events more accessible and inclusive.

Lastly, thanks to a revitalization grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), LEPFA restored the Lansing Center's riverside balcony gazebo area, which had been closed since 2018. This

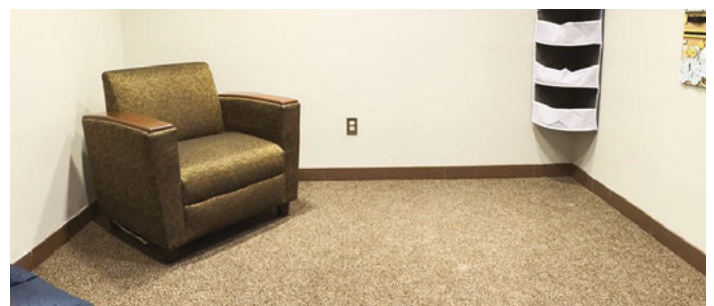


Over the past five years, LEPFA's facilities and events have attracted more than 3.3 million visitors to Lansing, generating an impressive economic impact of over \$192 million.

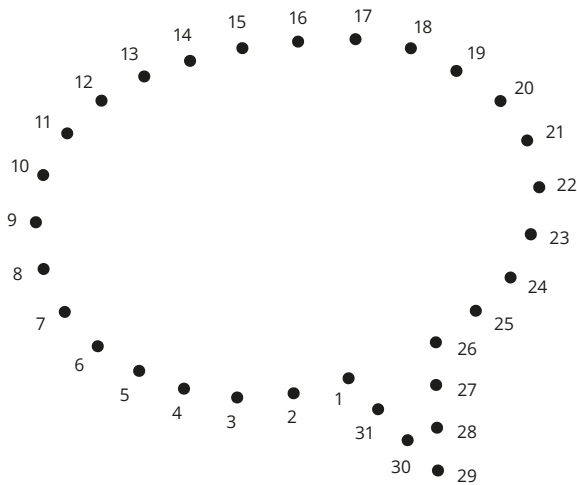
newly upgraded space, with its scenic views of the riverfront, offers a beautiful setting for event attendees to gather, relax, and network.

These enhancements add even more appeal to the Lansing Center, which proudly hosts marquee events like the 2024 Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce's Annual Dinner and the 2024 ATHENA Lansing Celebration. LEPFA's dedication to service, safety, and continuous improvement solidifies Lansing as a premier event destination in Michigan.

We invite you to experience these new additions firsthand and consider the Lansing Center as the ideal venue for your next event—where connections flourish, memories are made, and the Lansing economy continues to thrive. ●



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Leadership Lansing Launches its 10th Cohort

Leadership Lansing has kicked off its milestone 10th year in October with a cohort of 43 leaders from a diverse group of organizations throughout greater Lansing. Leadership Lansing is a program sponsored by the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) and is designed to develop and equip the next generation of community leaders. The eight-month program runs each year from October to May. In the first nine years of Leadership Lansing, 344 outstanding leaders from around the region have completed the program.



“We didn’t know what to expect back in 2015 when we launched Leadership Lansing. Frankly we were hoping to have 15 or 20 people so we could make a go of it,” said Tim Daman, president & CEO, LRCC. “We had 33 people sign up for that first cohort and it has been growing ever since. We are thrilled that we have been able to meet a need that our members have to help develop their talent and get them more deeply connected into the Greater Lansing region.”

The 2024-25 Leadership Lansing program commenced on October 22 with an opening night dinner at R.E. Olds Museum, a fun and informative way to get to know fellow cohort members and learn more about the region’s strong connection to the automotive industry. The following day, participants enjoyed a Strengthfinder’s training where they learned how to more effectively leverage their strengths at work. LRCC President & CEO Tim Daman was the season’s first ‘Lunch with a Leader’ speaker and shared his thoughts on leadership both for individuals and for the region as a whole. The group also enjoyed a tour of the Lansing Board of Water and Light’s (BWL) Dye Water Conditioning Plant. Many thanks to BWL Chief Operating Officer Dave Bolan and his team for organizing and leading the program.

Leadership Lansing exposes its participants to important leadership and community issues through a combination of guest speakers, panel discussion, field trips and individual leadership training. Veteran coaches and leadership consultants Susan Combs and Ross Woodstock have co-facilitated the program since the very beginning. Participants in this year’s program and the organizations they represent include:

- **Vera Alam**, LAFCU
- **Amber Baker**, Eaton RESA
- **Nicholas Baker**, Innovare
- **Krista Beyer**, YMCA of Metropolitan Lansing
- **Jerry Block**, Peckham
- **Ashley Crosser**, Alzheimer's Association
- **Joe Dimambro**, Playmakers Fitness Foundation
- **Krista Dowding**, Michigan Health & Hospital Association
- **Luisa Ellena**, Dart Bank
- **Zachary Emerson**, LAFCU
- **Sergio Franco**, General Motors Lansing Operations
- **Laura Friestrom**, Farm Bureau Insurance
- **Angie Goodman**, Lansing Board of Water & Light
- **Ashley Gregory**, McLaren Greater Lansing
- **Benjamyn Greiner**, Peckham Inc.
- **Karin Hanson**, Michigan State University
- **Triquita Hicks**, Lansing Promise
- **Monique Hudson**, Jackson
- **Sara Jobson**, Eaton RESA
- **Brook Jones**, LAFCU
- **Nickolas Lentz**, Capitol Fundraising Associates
- **Andre Manuel**, Lansing Board of Water and Light
- **Connor McCarthy**, Mercantile Bank
- **Shannon Oleksyk**, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
- **Erin O'Rourke**, Potter Park Zoological Society
- **Christine Pearson**, Granger
- **Kari Pollok**, McLaren Greater Lansing
- **Fred Render**, Capital Steel & Wire
- **Arianna Ridderbusch**, MSU Federal Credit Union
- **Sarah Ring**, Dean Trailways of Michigan
- **Julie Ross**, Maner Costerisan
- **Keaton Sackett**, Plante Moran
- **Hilary Sasyk**, University Club of MSU
- **Kristin Schleman**, Michigan Economic Development Corporation
- **Lucas Shaw**, DBI Business Interiors
- **Scott Skowronek**, Lansing Community College Foundation
- **Kellie Swiger**, LAFCU
- **Kelsey Teriberger**, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce
- **Josh Tolbert**, The Christman Company
- **Elaine Unger**, Choose Lansing
- **Rhonda Jones**, Lansing Board of Water and Light
- **Candace Williams**, LAFCU
- **Tammy Wilson**, PNC Bank
- **Meghan Ziehmer**, Lansing Sports Commission ●



Jane Mitchell

2024 ATHENA LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT

Entrepreneur Bolsters Brands and Community

By Jennifer McEntee

Jane Mitchell was a hairstylist with a library card in the early 1990s.

With two school-aged children, she wanted to shift careers to avoid working nights and weekends. So Mitchell went to the library and studied *Entrepreneur Magazine* booklets about starting a home-based business.

"I just flipped through the pages until I found something that sounded interesting," Mitchell said.

With help from the Small Business Development Center in Lansing, Mitchell created a business plan for the 1994 launch of Cards 4 You, in which she sent thank-you notes and holiday cards on behalf of corporate clients.

"At the height of my card-sending business, I was sending about 20,000 to 30,000 Christmas cards for other businesses every year and about 900 thank-you cards a month," Mitchell recalled.

The business evolved as clients asked to send chocolates and other promotional items with their greeting cards. Her branded merchandise became more popular, so Mitchell changed the name to Tarzan Promotions in 1998. After a cease-and-desist letter from the Edgar Rice Burroughs' estate alleging "Tarzan" trademark infringement, the business name swung to Jungle Jane Promotions in 2011.

Mitchell continued to grow Jungle Jane Promotions by seeking out mentors – she was the 2012 ATHENA

PowerLink recipient – and through education, earning her Master of Advertising Specialties in 2014 by completing more than 200 hours of training.

Today, Jungle Jane Promotions works with businesses and organizations throughout the Greater Lansing region to create award plaques, trade show tote bags, logoed t-shirts, drinkware, and office supplies, among other products. She's brought her son and son-in-law into the business with an eye toward succession planning.





And along the way, she's found time to give back to the community. Mitchell serves on the board of the grief support nonprofit Ele's Place and is a member of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club of Delta-Waverly. She was inducted into the Michigan Promotional Professionals Association's Hall of Fame in 2022.

In recognition of her lifetime of achievements, Mitchell is the 2024 ATHENA Leadership Award recipient, as named by the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. She will formally receive her award at the annual ATHENA Lansing Celebration luncheon on Thursday, December 5th, at the Lansing Center.

The ATHENA Leadership Award honors leaders who excel in their careers, dedicate time to their community, and mentor women in their professional ambitions.

Mitchell said she feels privileged to receive the 2024 ATHENA Leadership Award, especially as it puts her in esteemed company.

"It's very prestigious," Mitchell said. "I've been in business for 30 years and watched a lot of other ATHENA winners and been to a lot of the events. So to think that I would get asked to be in with that same group of people is really quite an honor. I don't think enough people realize how special this is."

Stella Cash, who was the 2012 ATHENA Leadership Award recipient, was among those who nominated Mitchell for this year's award. Cash said she met Mitchell by way of Women Working Wonders, an all-volunteer committee of the UM Health-Sparrow Foundation.

"She's always willing to help out, sometimes with jobs that nobody else wants to do. She's creative and very philanthropic," Cash observed. "And I thought, this woman has a story. I want to get to know her."

**SHE IS A
SELF-MADE WOMAN
LIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM.**

*Stella Cash,
2012 ATHENA Leadership
Award recipient*

Cash made an effort to get to know Mitchell and was impressed by her dedication to family, entrepreneurship, and mentorship.

"She is a self-made woman living the American Dream," said Cash. "So many of us go to college, and that opened the doors for us. Jane created her door and opened it."

Michelle Massey, who received the 2021 ATHENA Leadership Award, agrees that it took a lot of "stick-to-it-ness" for Mitchell to persevere in an often male-dominated business climate.

"It took a lot of advocating for herself and for her business," said Massey, who met Mitchell through mutual professional networks. "She shows that you can be an entrepreneur based upon your dreams, your desires, and hard work."

JANE MITCHELL: 2024 ATHENA LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT



As vice president of community and customer operations for software company TechSmith, Massey became a client of Jungle Jane Promotions about a year ago.

"You want to make sure that employees have access to good swag and merchandise. It's really important to be able to rock your brand," Massey said.

Massey said Mitchell has been able to create unique merchandise that hits the mark, often on a tight deadline.

"From a business perspective, she listens, she takes what you need under consideration and she will make it work for you and your business so that you can be successful," Massey said.

"It's about making you feel valued as a customer. I know that I am not her biggest client. I know that I am not a client who has been with her the longest. Yet she treats me just as if I was."

Mitchell puts that same effort into her community work, lending her talents to business organizations and events throughout the Lansing region.

"It's those little things that keep your loyalty, that make you proud to be a part of this community," Massey said. "She's quietly behind the scenes, making sure that her business has a strong foundation and is continuously giving back to our community. I think that's how greatness is built."

In a bit of serendipity, Jungle Jane Promotions helped create the Lansing Center's new ATHENA Lansing Hall of Fame wall, featuring past winners of the ATHENA Leadership Award.

Mitchell said she's especially proud of the leadership she contributed after completing her year as an ATHENA PowerLink mentee. She collaborated with other ATHENA Lansing leaders to retool the program to better help women take their businesses to the next level.

"We really have a phenomenal PowerLink program now," Mitchell said. "To see that I've been able to help make that a more successful program than it used to be is a big deal for me." **CONTINUED PAGE 18**

**SHE SHOWS THAT YOU
CAN BE AN ENTREPRENEUR
BASED UPON YOUR
DREAMS, YOUR DESIRES,
AND HARD WORK.**
*Michelle Massey, 2021 ATHENA
Leadership Award recipient*

ATHENA PowerLink Award Recipient Jacqueline Taylor: Early Childhood Education Advocate Grows Local Presence



Taylor

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce has named Jacqueline Taylor, owner and founder of Lansing's Little Dreamers Daycare Center, as the 2025 ATHENA PowerLink Award (APL) recipient.

APL is a national mentoring program connecting women business owners with their own dream team of advisors. The

Lansing-area advisory panel will donate an estimated \$25,000 worth of business consultation services over the next calendar year to help Taylor attain the next level of her daycare's success.

Taylor began Little Dreamers in 2015 as a home childcare provider with six students.

"So I grew from a family facility to a group, and then from a group to a center in 2021. It's been a beautiful process of growth," said Taylor. "We are in this very fragile but exciting time in our business. I've grown things as far as I know how to do on my own, so I'm excited to have this wise council."

On November 1st, Little Dreamers Daycare Center held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to unveil the recent expansion of its facility on S. Waverly Road, growing by 3,000 square feet and three classrooms.

The larger space means the daycare can increase its child headcount from 30 to 60. Taylor and her team are working through the student waiting list while hiring and training an additional 15 employees. Before the expansion, Little Dreamers had 13 employees.

"We're excited to welcome more families," Taylor said. "I'm really passionate about bringing high-quality, early childhood education to our community."

Little Dreamers Daycare Center is licensed to care for children from birth to 12 years old. The latest business expansion means the daycare will be able to offer before- and after-school supervision, as well as drop-in services.

"We're trying to be creative about solving the needs that our community has," Taylor said.

Over the course of her career, Taylor has become an advocate for early childhood development in the Greater



Lansing region, emphasizing the need for young learners to have access to play-based curricula, nutritious meals, and comprehensive support for families.

In October, Little Dreamers hosted state legislators and the nonprofit Early Childhood Investment Corp. to discuss the systemwide needs of childcare professionals in Michigan.

"We want to continue to be a part of the solution because we recognize that — not just in Lansing, but really in our country — we're having an issue with childcare."

For more information about Little Dreamers Daycare Center, visit www.littledreamersdaycare.com.

Jacqueline Taylor ATHENA PowerLink Advisory Panel

Thank you to the following business leaders who have agreed to serve on Jacqueline's APL advisory panel in 2025.

- **Rathbun Insurance:** Heather Kim
- **Lansing Economic Area Partnership:** Tony Willis & Jazmin Anderson
- **InVerve Marketing:** Angelique DuPhene
- **Maner Costerisan:** Jessica Fleet
- **HRS:** Alissa Parks
- **Foster Swift Collins & Smith:** Gabrielle Lawrence

**Please note the advisory panel is still being created and additional business leaders will be added.*

JANE MITCHELL: 2024 ATHENA LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT

Mitchell said her involvement in the local business community means her Jungle Jane Promotions clients can always count on her to do her best work.

"I'm going to see you at every event I go to, so I'm not hiding," Mitchell said. "It's all about the family and all about the relationships."

Industrywide, the most popular logoed merchandise tends to be shirts, bags, and drinkware, Mitchell said. But with more than a million printable products on the market, Mitchell said she likes to think "way outside the box." The craziest product she's helped create: personalized urinal screens.

"I did a really good campaign for a guy who had a cab company. He put, 'If you're leaning on the wall, call a cab.' So, if it's your niche and that's what you need, then that's perfect," said Mitchell. "There's so much out there, and there's no reason to just always do the same thing."

As for her own marketing, Mitchell's business card is a microfiber cleaning cloth.

"I set myself apart by doing different stuff," she said.

When she's not consulting clients on the best products for their promotional budgets, Mitchell is often riding bikes with her husband of 43 years, Ken. They like to travel and have visited 48 states so far. They also travel to watch their four granddaughters in sporting events. Mitchell enjoys crafts, family game time, and cruising in the couple's Corvette.

Mitchell said Jungle Jane Promotions has given her the flexibility to raise a family while growing a company she hopes will last for generations to come.

For others who might be considering entrepreneurship or even a big career change, Mitchell suggests tapping into the local business community for guidance. ATHENA Women's Interest Network, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the Small Business Development Center are all excellent resources, she said.

"I would say, figure out what you want to do, do the research, and get experts in that field or in the business community to help you to figure it out," Mitchell said. "There are people who are so willing to help. Most people love to see other businesses succeed." ●

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Lansing Regional Chamber Helps Businesses Achieve 2025 Marketing Goals

2025 LRCC MEDIA KIT & SPONSORSHIP GUIDE CONNECTS BUSINESSES WITH COMMUNITY

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) invites you to explore its 2025 Media Kit and Sponsorship Guide! This guide offers more information on how your organization can leverage the LRCC's wide range of events and sponsorship opportunities to enhance your brand visibility, connect with leaders, and reach Greater Lansing's vibrant business community.

"At the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, we are committed to helping businesses grow and succeed. Our 2025 Media Kit and Sponsorship Guide provide valuable opportunities for local organizations to enhance their brand visibility, build meaningful connections, and engage with the vibrant Greater Lansing business community," said, Bridget Drzal, vice president of member engagement, LRCC. "We look forward to partnering with our members and local businesses to help them achieve their marketing goals in the year ahead."

LRCC offers a diverse range of opportunities tailored to elevate your organization's presence, including advertising placements in our FOCUS magazine, high-visibility event sponsorships, and digital and social media engagement options.

Don't miss this opportunity to elevate your business in 2025 with the LRCC. Explore the full range of options in the 2025 LRCC Media Kit and Sponsorship Guide to learn more about how we can help you achieve your business and marketing goals. Visit lansingchamber.org to learn more. ●



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Congratulations to **McDonald's** in Lansing on its grand reopening. The restaurant, located at 6300 St. Joseph Hwy, is proudly owned and operated by Jon M. Campbell, Sr., and his company, JMC INC McDonald's. This location has employed a dedicated team of 40 individuals who are eager to serve the community.



Royal Scot Golf and Bowl celebrated the official opening of its golf simulator with a ribbon-cutting ceremony! Royal Scot Golf and Bowl has four state-of-the-art Trackman Golf Simulators that will allow you to practice and play in any weather, at any time of year. Additionally, there is a private bar and dartboards upstairs, for you to relax and enjoy some drinks and food after your round.



Congratulations to **Shafer Redi-Mix** on their ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating its location in Lansing. What began in 1982 as a single ready-mix plant has now expanded to seven computerized plants across Michigan. With over 40 years of experience, Shafer is a leader in modernization, effectively integrating technology into fundamental processes.



Vital Care of Lansing celebrated its grand opening in Okemos with a ribbon-cutting ceremony! Vital Care makes infusion therapy services easy for patients, providers, and caretakers. They provide safe, convenient, and comprehensive infusion therapy services for patients with acute and chronic conditions in the comfort of their home or an alternative site.

HAPPY
Holidays

A heartfelt thank you to our amazing clients and exceptional team for making 2024 a success!

TRIO TERRA

Lansing Regional Chamber-PAC Celebrates Success in November 5 General Election

The Lansing Regional Chamber-Political Action Committee (LRC-PAC) is proud to highlight its remarkable success rate in the November 5th general election. In this election cycle, the LRC-PAC endorsed 44 candidates across federal, state, and local levels, including positions for the U.S. Senate, State House, County Board of Commissioners, Sheriff, Prosecutor, and the Lansing Community College (LCC) Board of Trustees. Of these endorsed candidates, 42 achieved victory, resulting in an outstanding 95% success rate for the LRC-PAC. Below you will find additional information on election results at the federal, state and local levels.

*LRC-PAC
Endorsed 44
candidates from federal
to local offices for the 2024
general election. 42 out of 44
endorsed candidates were
successful, achieving
an impressive 95%
success rate.*

LRC-PAC Endorsements Overview

- **Endorsed 44 candidates** from federal to local offices for the 2024 general election.
- **42 out of 44** endorsed candidates were successful, achieving an impressive **95% success rate**.
- **Supported two proposals**—the Ingham County Lodging Excise Tax Increase and the Eaton County Tax Limitation Alteration Proposal—which were both defeated by voters.
- **Maintained neutrality** on the Ingham County Housing & Homeless Millage, which passed.

- Eaton County Board of Commissioners **retained a Republican majority**.
- Ingham County Board of Commissioners **retained a Democratic majority**.
- All four endorsed candidates for the **Lansing Community College Board of Trustees were victorious**.
- All endorsed public safety officials, including **Prosecutors and Sheriffs, were successful in their elections**, ensuring strong leadership for law enforcement and community safety across the region.

Key & Notable Highlights

Federal

- U.S. Senate: Elissa Slotkin defeated Mike Rogers in a historic close race, with **Slotkin receiving 48.6% to Rogers' 48.3% (2,708,212 - 2,687,995)**. This marked one of Michigan's closest U.S. Senate races.
 - U.S. Senate is now under Republican control with a 52-47 majority, with one race (Pennsylvania) still uncalled.
- 7th Congressional District: **Tom Barrett defeated Curtis Hertel Jr., 50.3% to 46.6% (226,694 - 209,842)**.
 - U.S. House of Representatives retained Republican control with 218 seats needed to maintain the majority.

State

- State Representative **Angela Witwer won with 52.1% to 47.9% (28,210 - 25,954)**.
- State House of Representatives **flipped to Republican control**, creating a divided government in 2025.

Local

- Delhi Township Supervisor **John Hayhoe lost his reelection bid**, marking a significant loss for Delhi Township's leadership.
- Clinton County Board of Commissioners **retained a Republican majority**.

Local Proposals

- Passed: Ingham County Housing & Homeless Millage with **62% support**.
- Defeated: **Ingham County Lodging Excise Tax Increase (59% against, 41% support)**.
 - Despite being a tax on visitors, this proposal was not supported by voters.
- Defeated: **Eaton County Tax Limitation Alteration Proposal (51% against, 49% support)**.
 - The LRCC supported this proposal and has formally requested Eaton County establish a financial health team, inspired by Lansing's successful model, to address potential financial distress concerns.

About the LRC-PAC

The Lansing Regional Chamber-Political Action Committee (LRC-PAC) is the political arm of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. It operates independently and does not use membership dues for its activities. The primary objective of the LRC-PAC is to endorse candidates who support a favorable business climate throughout the region, ensuring the continued growth and success of businesses and the community. ●

Advocating for Business: LRCC's Role During Michigan's Lame Duck Session

During the Michigan State Legislature's Lame Duck session — the period between the election and the start of the new legislative term — lawmakers often address complex or time-sensitive issues. The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) public affairs team is hard at work on your behalf, collaborating with business coalitions and trade associations to advocate for practical solutions, defend business interests, and improve the regulatory environment. The LRCC's mission is to ensure you can continue to operate your business effectively while contributing to a thriving Michigan economy. Below are some of the top legislative priorities the LRCC is focused on during this critical period:

1. House Bills 6056-6057 - Legislative Fixes to Paid Sick Leave and Minimum Wage/Preserve Tip Credit

- **Support:** HB 6056 introduces gradual minimum wage increases while preserving the tip credit system through 2029, balancing workforce needs and business sustainability. HB 6057 refines Michigan's paid sick leave laws with clarified definitions and employer-friendly provisions, creating a more predictable and manageable framework for businesses.

2. Senate Bills 1079-1080 - Workers' Compensation Adjustments

- **Oppose:** These bills could raise workers' compensation costs for businesses, creating unnecessary financial and administrative burdens. We are actively advocating for practical reforms that ensure fair compensation without overburdening employers.

3. "Polluter Pay" Legislation (e.g., SB 605-611, HB 5241-5247)

- **Oppose:** The LRCC is a member of the Retain Brownfield & Urban Investment Coalition (#RebuildMI), opposing proposed changes that would impose overly strict cleanup standards and extend liabilities, hindering redevelopment efforts and discouraging economic investment. We are actively working to defend policies that promote growth while supporting a balanced and practical approach to environmental stewardship."

4. Bad Faith Legislation (e.g., HB 4681)

- **Oppose:** Proposed changes under this legislation would increase processing costs for claims and create inefficiencies. The Chamber, in collaboration with the Don't Touch MI Rates Coalition, is advocating for regulatory consistency to ensure a fair, predictable environment for businesses.

5. Senate Bill 228 and House Bill 4359 - Repealing Local Regulation of Plastic Bags

- **Oppose:** These bills could lead to inconsistent local regulations, complicating compliance for businesses operating across jurisdictions. The Chamber supports uniform statewide standards that provide clarity and efficiency.

6. House Bills 6108-6111 - Sand and Gravel Mining Regulations

- **Support:** These bills streamline permitting processes, create consistent statewide standards, and balance environmental needs with economic growth.

These efforts demonstrate the LRCC's commitment to advocating for practical solutions while defending the interests of businesses to ensure Michigan remains a competitive place to do business. For a full list of legislation and updates, visit the Advocacy Page on the LRCC's website. ●



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NEW HIRES



Lasky

Fraser Trebilcock has hired attorney **Charles L. Lasky** to work primarily in the firm's Lansing office. Lasky has over four decades of experience, primarily

focusing on real property law, business law, and financial institution law. He has served on the boards of various financial institutions in Michigan, Nevada, and Colorado, as well as serving on the board of trustees for the Ingham Regional Medical Center and the Ingham Regional Healthcare Foundation.

LAFCU has welcomed **Angela O'Neel** as payroll and benefits specialist and **Candace Williams**



O'Neel



Williams

as talent acquisition specialist, a newly-created position at the Michigan credit union. Both O'Neel and Williams bring key expertise to LAFCU's human resources team. O'Neel's primary responsibility as payroll and benefits specialist is to manage weekly payroll processing for LAFCU's 160-plus team members, handling salary adjustments, tax filings, and regulatory compliance. She also oversees open enrollment, monthly check requests, invoicing, and audits. As talent acquisition specialist, Williams manages LAFCU's recruitment efforts,

including sourcing candidates, conducting interviews, and facilitating new hire orientations.



Mollberg

Thoracic surgeon **Nathan Mollberg** has joined **McLaren Greater Lansing**. Dr. Mollberg comes from Bronson Methodist Hospital in Kalamazoo.

Mollberg received his medical degree from Michigan State University. He did his residency in general surgery at the University of Illinois at Mount Sinai Hospital, including a molecular oncology research fellowship at the University of Heidelberg in Germany. He completed his cardiothoracic surgery residency at the University of Washington in Seattle.

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PROMOTIONS



Holmes

Cindy Holmes is transitioning into the new role of membership and visitor services coordinator for **Choose Lansing**. In addition to her current duties coordinating

visitor services, Holmes will now assist **Melissa Nay**, membership and community outreach manager, with member engagement and events. Holmes joined the Choose Lansing team in 2023 with more than a decade of customer service-focused administrative experience. Previously, she served as membership coordinator and registrar for the Michigan Association of School Boards and as an administrative assistant to the principal at a private school.



Tahir

LAFCU has promoted **Umar Tahir** to vice president of the Michigan credit union's marketing, enterprise innovation, and digital assets. In his new role,

Tahir oversees LAFCU's digital platforms while guiding the credit union's efforts in alignment with its strategic plan. Tahir brings nearly 20 years of leadership experience to this newly established role at LAFCU, with 13 years in the financial services industry. He joined LAFCU in 2021 as branch manager of the Contact Center, overseeing phone services and member interactions through interactive teller machines at branch drive-throughs and other locations in the community.

AWARDS



LAFCU is proud to announce the winners of the 2024 "Write to Educate Essay Contest": **Vivian Hansen** of Pinckney High School, **Thomas Hays** of Napoleon High School, **Antonio Rojas** of East



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MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

Lansing High School, and **Elvis Vue** of Waverly High School. This year's winners were selected based on one-page essays that explored how their hometowns shaped their identities and contributed to their personal growth. The winning essays were published in the Lansing State Journal, the community sponsor of the contest. The Michigan credit union will award \$5,000 in college scholarships to each of the four winners, totaling \$20,000. Additionally, LAFUCU will donate \$2,000 to charities selected by the winners.

Lansing-based public accounting and business consulting firm **Maner Costerisan** has been recognized by *Accounting Today* as one of the "Best Firms to Work For" for the ninth consecutive year. Maner Costerisan ranked No. 27 nationally in the mid-sized category, which represents firms with between 50 and 249 employees. The Accounting Today award is based on data analysis and employee surveys. Maner Costerisan has nearly 200 team members.



LAFUCU was selected from over 1,600 submissions worldwide and honored in New York City with a "Bronze Stevie Award" in the Communications or PR Campaign of the Year - Diversity, Equity & Inclusion category for its four-week diversity, equity, and inclusion internal communications campaign. The initiative aimed to inform and engage LAFUCU staff about its DEI program and used e-blasts, videos, interactive activities, giveaways, and quizzes to communicate important information and encourage participation. LAFUCU was the only United States organization honored

in the DEI category. Okemos-based marketing communications firm **Publicom Inc.** provided the campaign's strategy, execution, and video production.

COMPANY NEWS

Martin Waymire is rebranding as **Bellwether Public Relations**, signifying a new chapter for the public relations and advocacy agency under partners **Josh Hovey**, **Angela Minicuci**, and **Andie Poole**. The trio purchased the business in 2022. Martin Waymire was founded by **Roger Martin** and **David Waymire** in Lansing in 2004. The agency has managed public relations, digital strategy, and advocacy campaigns for small to large corporations, coalitions, and associations. Policy areas have included health care, public health, utilities and energy, technology, insurance, casino gaming, the beverage industry, education, public transportation, and local, county, and state government. With 18 professional communicators and support staff, Bellwether Public Relations is headquartered in downtown Lansing but works with clients across Michigan and the nation.



Students participated in LAFUCU's "All About Donuts" financial literacy event.

LAFUCU launched a new chapter of its Listen & Learn Program, "All About Donuts." The Michigan credit union partnered with Quality Dairy to create a financial literacy event for three first-grade classes at Wilcox Elementary School and a first-grade class at Horizon Elementary in Holt. Quality Dairy

Saving the Family Cottage



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LRCC members can send a press release and photo about new hires, promotions, company recognitions or awards to info@lansingchamber.org and we will share it in our popular Members on the Move section.

marketing and category manager **Phil Platte** read students the book “If You Give a Dog a Donut” and shared a presentation on how donuts are made. Students received a baker’s hat and apron, and each child used a pretend quarter for payment. After purchasing their donuts, the class decorated them with sprinkles and frosting. LAFCU created the Listen & Learn Program to help young children build confidence in math and learn more about money.



McLaren Greater Lansing has performed its 10,000 robotically assisted minimally invasive surgery, demonstrating its commitment to providing advanced surgical care to the greater Lansing community. Robotically assisted minimally invasive surgery often leads to

smaller incisions, less pain, and faster recovery times for patients. With a team of skilled surgeons and technology such as the da Vinci robotic systems and the new ION robot for bronchoscopy, the hospital offers a range of minimally invasive procedures across specialties like cardiothoracic, vascular, general surgery, gynecology, and orthopedics.



Maner Costerisan closed for a half-day on Nov. 7 to host its seventh annual Maner Cares Day of Impact. Team members volunteered at 14 nonprofits, dedicating their time to support local communities. The event spanned Michigan, Ohio, and Georgia, as remote employees volunteered where they live. A record number of team members fanned out to volunteer at 12 organizations in Michigan, including City of Lansing Parks and Recreation, Ele’s Place, End Violent

Encounters, Greater Lansing Food Bank Garden Project, Haven House, Mid-Michigan Recovery Services Inc., SafeCenter, Origami Rehabilitation, Fleece & Thank You, Kids’ Food Basket, Treetops Collective, and Junior Achievement of Mid-Michigan. Since the launch of Maner Cares Day of Impact in 2018, the firm’s employees have contributed more than 2,500 volunteer hours, supporting over 60 nonprofit organizations.

Martin Commercial Properties is expanding its construction services division to Tampa, Florida, as part of the commercial real estate company’s continued growth. Known for its general contracting, design-build, project management, and development services, Martin Commercial Properties is strengthening its commitment to customized construction services. The firm serves clients nationally, with offices in Lansing, Grand Rapids, and Tampa. ●

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